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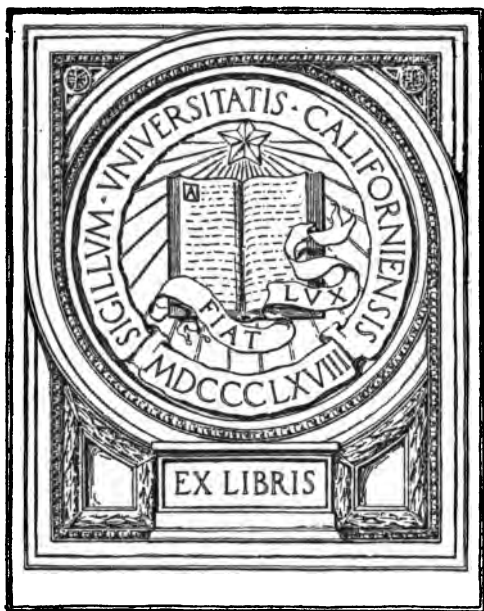
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MESSAGE AND  
MELODY 

RICHARD BURTON

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**MESSAGE AND  
MELODY** ❁ ❁ ❁

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MESSAGE AND  
MELODY ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

*A Book of Verse*

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RICHARD BURTON



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**MESSAGE AND  
MELODY** ❁ ❁ ❁

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## SONG OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL

**W**E are the toilers from whom God barred  
The gifts that are good to hold.  
We meant full well and we tried full  
hard,  
And our failures were manifold.

And we are the clan of those whose kin  
Were a millstone dragging them down.  
Yea, we had to sweat for our brother's sin,  
And lose the victor's crown.

TO VIND  
ABSOLUTION

MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

The seeming-able, who all but scored,  
From their teeming tribe we come :  
What was there wrong with us, O Lord,  
That our lives were dark and dumb ?

The men ten-talented, who still  
Strangely missed of the goal,  
Of them we are : it seems Thy will  
To harrow some in soul.

We are the sinners, too, whose lust  
Conquered the higher claims ;  
We sat us prone in the common dust,  
And played at the devil's games.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

We are the hard-luck folk, who strove  
Zealously, but in vain :  
We lost and lost, while our comrades throve,  
And still we lost again.

We are the doubles of those whose way  
Was festal with fruits and flowers ;  
Body and brain we were sound as they,  
But the prizes were not ours.

A mighty army our full ranks make,  
We shake the graves as we go ;  
The sudden stroke and the slow heartbreak,  
They both have brought us low.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And while we are laying life's sword aside,  
Spent and dishonored and sad,  
Our epitaph this, when once we have died:  
"The weak lie here, and the bad,"

We wonder if this can be really the close,  
Life's fever cooled by death's trance;  
And we cry, though it seem to our dearest of  
foes,  
"God, give us another chance!"

## THE OLD SANTA FÉ TRAIL

**I**T wound through strange scarred hills,  
down canyons lone

Where wild things screamed, with winds  
for company ;

Its milestones were the bones of pioneers.  
Bronzed, haggard men, often with thirst a-moan,  
Lashed on their beasts of burden toward the sea :  
An epic quest it was of elder years,  
For fabled gardens or for good, red gold  
The trail men strove in iron days of old.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

To-day the steam-god thunders through the vast,  
While dominant Saxons from the hurtling trains  
Smile at the aliens, Mexic, Indian,  
Who offer wares, keen-colored, like their past :  
Dread dramas of immitigable plains  
Rebuke the softness of the modern man ;  
No menace, now, the desert's mood of sand ;  
Still westward lies a green and golden land.

For at the magic touch of water, blooms  
The wilderness, and where of yore the yoke  
Tortured the toilers into dateless tombs,  
Lo! brightsome fruits to feed a mighty folk.

THE SOUL TO THE BODY

**W**LD mate, who long hast friended me  
Through many a shift of rain and sun,  
Now that the journey's well-nigh done,  
The wear and tear of Time, I see,  
Threatens a breach 'twixt me and thee.

For I am strong, as ne'er before,  
While thou art waxen spent, and weak;  
The touch of tears is on thy cheek,  
Thy gait is limp, thy locks are hoar,  
The latch is broken at thy door.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Yet burns full bright my lamp within :  
When it is quenched, what wilt thou do ?  
Dear comrade of the dusk and dew,  
Thou fellow-wrestler against sin  
In conflicts that God helped us win.

To say good-bye, I cannot bear ;  
By all the bonds of brotherhood,  
If I encounter any good  
Whither I go, 'tis thine to share,—  
Boon friends together, Here or There!

So, till our parting shall take place,  
I hold this sacred hope the while,  
To light my sorrow with a smile :  
That, when I soar and sing in space,  
I may behold thee face to face!

## CONQUERORS

**A**LL times and climes may claim  
you,

O conquerors, mystic ones :  
How may my poor tongue name you,  
Dreamers 'neath many suns ?

Makers of stately story,  
Shapers of wood and stone ;  
Painters of colored glory,  
Lovers of rhythmic tone ;

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Weavers of fabrics wondrous,  
To last through the changeful years ;  
Mages of harmonies thundrous,  
Masters of mirth and tears ;

Moulders of various beauty  
To challenge all time, and rest  
Secure in a sense of Duty  
Done at an Art's behest ;

Soldiers, who stood in battle  
Rocks in a righteous cause ;  
Statesmen, who shook the rabble  
Awake to the better laws ;

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Men of inventing vision  
Who grapple with clod or cloud,  
Till earth take a gleam elysian  
And matter must speak aloud ;

Pleaders for stricken masses,  
Men of the speech that sings ;  
Prophets, whose light o'erpasses  
The thicket of sensate things,—

All climes and times may claim you,  
But one is your dream, your star :  
Brothers-in-arms we name you,  
Builders of Good ye are.


## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

O conquerors, courage, aspire,  
Dream on, while ye kiss the rod;  
One in your great desire,  
And one in the thought of God.

SIDNEY LANIER

For a memorial meeting ten years after the poet's death

HE mirk hangs mute around a tomb.  
O mildew blight that follows bloom!  
O sad cessation of a song  
Flute-sweet and like a trumpet strong!

What do I say? The dark's ashine  
With soul-light that is surely thine.  
What do I say? The silence breaks  
In music that thy spirit makes.

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

**D**EAR ghost,— whose ruddy presence needs  
must fling  
A ray of cheer among thy brother  
shades

In yon pale land of Sleep,— thy legacy  
The years make richer.

For the fellowship  
Of gallant souls who move down stirring ways  
Of blithe adventure ; for the moods of dream  
That blossomed, at the conjuring call of Art,  
Into Life's festal flowers of Romance ;

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

For lyric interludes of Song, whose sound  
Comes in pathetic cadences ; for words  
Apt, rare, and full of wisdom, touching deeps  
On deeps of human passion : for such gifts  
Surely the guerdon is love's long renown.

But most, O Comrade ours, we owe to thee  
For that brave gospel thou didst ever bring —  
Not pulpit-wise, but sweet as speech of birds :  
Courage and kindliness and joy-of-life  
Even in its motley and keen-edged with pain ;  
High spirit against evil, and the laugh  
Unbitter ; and that indomitable belief  
In brotherhood. 'Twould shame us, looking on  
Thy struggle and thy triumph, should we play  
The craven ; yea, thy present happy peace  
Heartens all laggards.




## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Therefore seems it meet  
To hail thee hero, fondly to recall  
Thy valiant days, thy victory over doom,—  
Child of delight and heir of loveliness,  
Great friend, whose followers would fain be true.

A BALLAD OF KINSMEN

PIA BAY wears a smooth, bright face  
When the tropic winds are low,  
But the harbor curve is a fearsome place  
When the great winds rise and blow.

'Tis perilous for barks to ride  
At anchor, when the surge  
Comes thundering in from the sea outside  
And foams on the rocky verge.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

From the Western States three ships were there,  
And one from the English Isle;  
They came when the skies were bland and fair,  
And the ocean ways a-smile.

But the fierce storms smote them, till they tossed  
Like chips, 'twixt sea and sky;  
And two of the ships of the States were lost,  
And the other drifted nigh

The coral reefs, to death; but saw  
The sturdy English ship  
Out from the harbor's seething maw  
Toward open water slip.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And sore they yearned to follow her  
    Beyond the barrier foam,  
To swap their coral sepulchre  
    For the sea-leagues leading home;

But the ill-starred Trenton could not sail  
    Nor steam; with beams aburst,  
A helpless hulk before the gale,  
    She staggered toward the Worst.

Yet, as the English, inch by inch,  
    Away from the shallows drew,  
The boys of the States, they did not flinch,  
    For they cheered the other crew.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Yea, never a soul showed craven then,  
Though their fate was plain to see;  
The doomed men waved to the luckier men  
And gave them three times three.

Three times three, and the cheer rang high  
Above the wind and the wave,  
As the English ship strained safely by,  
And the other on to her grave!

Oh, blood will tell, they were kinsmen all!  
Give the gallant lads a place  
On the good high-seats of the heroes' hall  
To kindle our common race!

THE CLAIM OF KINDRED

**I** AM not one, but many: murmuring  
through  
My blood I seem to hear a blended cry,  
Ancestral-strong, bidding me up and do  
A million deeds before I come to die.

Some of the voices call like organ tones  
Upon my soul for service that is meet ;  
Others unman me with melodious moans  
Or evil invitations perilous-sweet.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Some tell of high endeavor on the seas,  
Some, bugle-clear, declare that war is best ;  
Some lull me to a dream of summer ease  
In far-away, fair places where is rest.

Betwixt high heaven and hell the ample air  
Thrills with their pleadings, vibrates to their  
breath ;  
Deep in my heart I feel their vast despair,  
Their every hope, their game of life and death.

It is as though a countless company  
Drew a great circle round me, and did press  
Their myriad claims nor would not let me be  
Until unto them all I answered, Yes.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

I am not one, but many : all the past  
Houses within my breast and summons me ;  
And only God shall speak the word at last  
To quell the storm and give the mastery,

Since thus, despite my cherished pride of will,  
The passions of my kindred clasp me still !



STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

**N**OT in the morning vigor, Lord, am I  
Most sure of Thee, but when the day  
goes by

To evening and, all spent with work, my head  
Is bowed, my limbs are laid upon my bed.

Lo! in my weariness is faith at length,  
Even as children's weakness is their strength.

## THE MORNING SUMMONS

**W**HEN the mist is on the river, and the  
haze is on the hills,  
And the promise of the springtime all  
the ample heaven fills ;  
When the shy things in the wood-haunts, and  
the hardy on the plains,  
Catch up heart and feel a leaping life through  
winter-sluggish veins :

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Then the summons of the morning like a bugle  
moves the blood,  
Then the soul of man grows larger like a flower  
from the bud ;  
For the hope of high Endeavor is a cordial half  
divine,  
And the banner cry of Onward ! calls the lag-  
gards into line.

There is glamour of the moonlight when the  
stars rain peace below,  
But the stir and smell of morning is a better  
thing to know ;  
While the night is hushed and holden and trans-  
pierced by dreamy song,  
Lo ! the dawn brings dew and fire and the rap-  
ture of the strong.

## THE CITY OF LAISH

“Then the five men departed and came to Laish and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, . . . quiet, and secure, and had no business with any men.”



**H**AVE you read of the Orient people of  
Laish in the olden time,  
In the days when to battle was good  
and to kill was held no crime?  
How they dwelt at quiet, and had nor business  
nor bicker with man,  
Until they were smote by the sword in the grip  
of the chieftains of Dan?

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

The people of Dan came down and smote with  
the edge of the sword  
And builded a city therein, being led thereto of  
the Lord ;  
And the name of the city was changed from  
Laish, as they called it of yore,  
To Dan of the Danites, who came and conquered  
her people in war.

Since so it is written, we honor the host that the  
victors became,  
And righteously vanquished the foemen and  
wreathed their towers in flame ;  
Like a fiat of flame they descended, for so they  
were guided of God,  
And so was the future unfolded by sweeps of His  
terrible rod.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And yet in my heart there must harbor a feeling  
of pity and pain  
Because of the people so peaceful, who never  
might mingle again  
In streets of their love and their childhood, in  
Laish, their home-city, that lay  
As far from the worries of worldlings, as night  
time is far from the day.

And it seems that the glory of battle, the gory  
red signs of the same,  
Are pitiful-poor when we set them beside the  
lost calm of that name  
All dwellers in cities must mention whenso they  
would speak of a spot  
Where men were at quiet and peaceful, and mur-  
mur of war there was not.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Will some day that is hope of the dreamer, some  
place never chanted in song,  
Show peace in its borders unbroken, where men  
are both gentle and strong?  
Shall the lamb e'er be couched with the lion?  
Men ask it and look to the sky;  
Christ came and his presence declared it, so the  
dream may not utterly die.

VISION

**B**Y the boom of a bright, great sea,  
Once, under a tropic sky,  
In a scented night that was all alight  
With stars a-throb on high,  
Unsealed were the eyes of me :

For the earth beneath my tread  
Shrank, and was like a smoke,  
And the mighty deep and the skyey steep,  
To their vasty truth I woke,  
All the majesty o'erhead.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

With the universe I whirled,  
Of its length and breadth aware,  
Man's petty hates and his passing fates  
Seemed less than empty air  
In the light of the larger world.

I looked, as a living soul,  
Into the eyes of God,  
And I understood both bad and good  
In the scourging of His rod,  
And saw the ultimate goal.

Across abyssms flung  
I heard the ocean's speech  
And the pulsing stars explained the scars  
They suffered, each from each,  
When the universe was young.


## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Oh, the splendid sense of space !  
And the selfhood vanished quite  
In a shoreless sphere where day and year,  
Morning and noon and night  
Are one before God's face !

Wrapt in that vision wide,  
I seemed to briefly know  
God's ancient plan for the weal of man ;  
Under Time's ebb and flow,  
Eternity's sure tide.

IN TIME OF WAR

OW who shall read the writing  
That is writ upon the wall?  
Shall the peoples cease from fighting?  
Shall the good days come at all?

For the proud of earth do levy  
Gold, that battles may be won,  
And a burden direful heavy  
Bends the father and the son.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Though our own inviolate borders  
Widen out a myriad miles,  
We are hailed as dread marauders  
In the ultimate far isles.

Though in Europe's mood of kindness  
Peace is mooted for a day,  
Lo! there comes a mood of blindness,  
And red ravin has its way.

Yet the earth's stern law is spoken  
In the march of centuries,  
That the weak for good are broken,  
That the strong must rule the seas.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

We may conquer in all gladness  
If the cause be pure and high ;  
We can bear the passing sadness  
For the blessing by and by.

When, to spread the benefactions  
Of the world, the sword is swung,  
We may glimpse through storm-wrapt  
factions  
God's own lights in heaven hung.

Where, to lift a land's downtrodden,  
Bullets sing and cannons boom,  
There, though battle-fields be sodden,  
Shall God's flowers freshly bloom.

MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

When the broad earth's blinded races  
Strive but for some heavenly stake,  
And the higher life replaces  
The brief hell that weapons make ;

Then, with sound of exaltations  
Shall the better times begin,  
Then, ye captains of the nations,  
Shall the Prince of Peace come in.

THE BACKGROUND GROUP



THE crowd huzzas, the music madly plays;  
'Tis meet, for, lo! it is the day of days.

The home-returning heroes come: a  
cry

Of welcome should be lifted to the sky  
And flowers strew the people-trampled ways.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

The drums beat martially ; with rhythmic beat  
The steps resound along the gaping street.  
Hark, what acclaims ! And how the folk do  
press  
To see, to touch, maybe, the very dress  
Of those who dared the death, when Life is  
sweet!

But stay ! where joy is general, where the sound  
Of jubilant voices rends the air around,  
Why is yon group so silent in its place,  
With war's impassioned image face to face ?  
Wherefore those eyes cast nunlike on the ground ?



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**Who are these hangers-back, these dark-robed  
ones?**

**They are the mothers who are reft of sons ;  
The wives whose dearest lie all uncaressed  
Afar, with vital stains on brow or breast ;  
The children orphaned at the mouths of guns.**

## EXIT NIGHTINGALE

(Anton Nachtigall, aged 34, a shop foreman, shot himself dead yesterday. He was sick and discouraged.— *Morning Newspaper.*)



**H**ASTLY contrast, God's grim joke!  
Here's a man who, on a morn,  
Very weary, hopeless, spoke:  
"I am out of work, and scorn,  
Want and ugliness are mine."  
So this creature, made divine  
(So they tell us) simply shot  
His weak brains out — there's your plot!

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Nothing in it, say you? Stale?  
True, 'tis but a common tale,  
But the story gives me pause  
For a moment's space, because  
This poor breaker of God's laws  
Bore the name of — Nightingale!

Somewhere in the years behind,  
When men's names were first assumed —  
Tinker Tom or John the Smith,  
Handier to travel with —  
Somebody was this assigned:  
Nightingale. . . . Belike there bloomed  
On his cheek the badge of health  
And he had, instead of wealth,  
Music for his gift, could sing,  
Play the fiddle, lead the folk  
Down the jolly dancing-ring;

Make them thus forget their yoke,  
In some village . . . long ago.  
Merry lad, who far and wide  
Up and down the countryside  
Piped before the people so!  
Thus, the name bespoke the man.


Latterly there came a change  
In this very pretty plan  
And a name meant naught at all.  
Taylors sat within the Hall,  
Kings in hovels — passing strange!  
Time's inexorable jest  
Mocked the high and blurred the best.  
So with Nightingale,— he fell  
From his pristine grove and — well,  
Found himself in songless hell.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Heigho, how the world is run!  
Morn of glory, night of shame,  
Worms that crawl from out a bud.  
Every day 'twixt sun and sun  
Some poor devil's singing name  
Is wiped out in city mud.

CORONADO

 **O**N the beach at Coronado curves the shore  
in crescent wise,  
And the blue of sky and water merge  
divinely to the eyes;  
Dim, fair islands lift like phantoms from the bright  
Pacific floor,  
And the breakers fall but blandly where the sea-  
gulls dip and soar.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

There a spell of scented languor seems to still the  
pulse of pain,  
And perpetual springtide hovers over land and  
slumbrous main,  
There the blooms are lush and brilliant, there  
some great ship, wearing west,  
Seems to pause as loath at leaving all a haven  
holds of rest.

And the idler, lapped in pleasance, charmed to  
dreams by sound and sight,  
As he watches dawn or sunset or the sweeping  
stars of night,  
Lets his mind go groping backward to the  
strenuous pioneers,  
When the red-gold fever took them in the far,  
untr tranquil years ;

To the Spaniards with their visions — quick to  
fancy were they then —  
Of some vast and hoarded treasures; Coronado  
and his men;  
To the splendid quests and tumults, to the tor-  
ments and defeats,  
To the rovers by the rivers and the pirates in  
their fleets.

But so fleckless are the heavens, and such peace  
is found below,  
In the sea-companioned gardens where the great  
blooms wax and blow,  
Such a slow and sweet siesta bring the magical  
warm noons,  
That all anguishes and ardors are unreal as  
ancient runes.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

So it is — until a storm-wind rolls the billows up  
the coast,  
And the night is thick with portents, and the  
keen air's clamoring host  
Fills the vault — ah, then returning, trooping  
back refreshed and strong,  
Come the old-time, lost marauders, ruling men  
with sword and song.

And they cry with clangorous voices when they  
sight a timid sail,  
And their drinking-bouts are mighty as the  
hours to dawn go pale ;  
Royally do they foregather and their Presences  
resume  
All the potency of living, as they revel in the  
gloom.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

But with day, behold the languor and the beauty  
all restored,  
Once again the waters gentle, once again divine  
accord  
'Twixt the earth and swooning heavens, while  
the sand in crescent wise  
Curves to meet the benediction of the Californian  
skies.

## THE PROCESSION

“**N**OW let our womankind tend hearth  
and house,  
Obey and love, receive, in turn, due love  
Of husbands, brothers, sons who battle for  
Their wants and welfare in the outer ways,  
And so fulfil the Law. This sums the whole.”

Thus spake Sir Oracle. Meanwhile, meseemed  
Through mists of time I saw in rich array  
Pass by a white procession, one by one:

The swart-browed queen whose Eastern Sov-  
ereignty  
Was large, but larger yet her passionate sway  
Over two men who made the Western world,  
Caesar and Antony, both at her feet.  
And then, bright Helen, Menelaus' wife,  
And Paris' leman in a golden day ;  
So fair that poets e'er since have joyed to sing  
Her loveliness, which claimed its hecatombs  
Of victims, Greeks and Trojans battailous.  
Next, Magdalen, whose penitence is famed  
And precious, and the Mary men revere,  
Walking in sisterwise, with equal mien,  
Save that the Mother's brow was full-content,  
The Maiden's wistful. Then proud Joan of Arc,

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

A peasant yet a princess, with a light  
Fanatic yet divine within her eyes;  
A martyr's eyes that look through flames to God!  
The while the lips say: "Patience, 'tis for France."  
And Sappho, fillet-bound about the head,  
Chanting swift lyric lays beside the sea  
Aegean blue,—lays soft yet strong withal,  
Since still we hear, albeit brokenly.  
Hypatia, too, whose spirit was not quenched  
By mob-defiance nor untimely death,  
Strode gravely sweet and calm; and Portia, she  
That donned a mannish habit for the nonce  
And plead with angel-tongue for Mercy's place  
Along with formal justice. Shyly there  
Came Sister Dorothea, half a Saint

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Yet all a woman, binding wounds and sores;  
Her passing was a breath from the Command:  
"Unto the least of these my brethren."—

These, yea, and many more filed by, until  
The mist grew mythic and they faded out  
Into the common light of day: anon,  
Again I heard the little, piping voice  
Make deposition as to woman's worth.

WHEN THE DREAM COMES TRUE



SHALL see far plainer than I do

Here and now, when what I dream is  
come :

They that love me not, my slips shall rue,  
Those I love not, deeming dull and dumb,  
I shall wake to find full fellowsome,  
When my dream comes true.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Lightest words that worked for me and you  
Barriers that clomb to mountain heights;  
Little deeds that into great wrongs grew,  
All for lack of flashing heaven-lights,  
Shall be smoothed and shapened all to rights,  
When my dream comes true.

It may even be the love I woo  
Blindly now, my vision choked with tears,  
Then shall understand me, know how true  
Was the heart struck voiceless through its fears;  
Ah! a moment shall make sweet the years,  
When my dream comes true!





# POEMS OF MUSIC



I.

AN OLD SONG



**HERE'S** a ballad of quaint love-longing  
That often I yearn to hear,  
For it sets the memories thronging  
And wakens a by-gone year.

The words were but simple and pretty,  
With a tender final fall,  
Yet I swear that this old-time ditty  
Still holds my heart in thrall.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

It was sung by a girl whose fashion  
Can never grow stale nor old ;  
But she and her young soul's passion  
Lie quiet in graveyard mould.

It was not the music, I fancy,  
Nor the story — but just the way  
She sang, and the necromancy  
Wrought by a dear, dead day.

At times they will play it to me  
Now — but my heart sinks low ;  
It isn't the same that drew me  
There in the long ago.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

I miss the meaning; 'tis broken —  
The spell of singer and song;  
I sigh for a vanished token,  
For a magic of yore I long;

For the place where the voice would waver  
And a sob rise up in the throat,  
For the little pathetic quaver  
That wasn't on any note!

II.

SECOND FIDDLE



**J**UST behind the first fiddle he bends  
To his bow, as a slave to the rod ;  
All his soul to the music he lends,  
All his eyes to the leader, his god.

His skill is not blaring, but sure ;  
Mark his bowing, the rhythmic accord  
Of his motions, the sound, crystal-pure,  
That he lures from the violin's board.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

The crowd never look at his face ;  
He is one of the sixty who try  
With wood-wind or brass to displace  
The world by a dream from the sky.

Not his, like the master of strings,  
To step forth superbly alone  
And play a Cremona that sings  
With heavenliest tone upon tone.

No soloist he, but a part  
In the mighty ensemble that soars  
In the regions divine of an art  
Where man but aspires and adores.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

His joy is the gladness of those  
Who feel they are helping the whole;  
Less fluent the harmony flows  
If an instrument flag, if a soul

Unfaithful should be to the beat  
Of the baton that bids him be true;  
And the music is oftentimes so sweet,  
Small matter what makes it, or who.

And haply — who knows? — in the day  
When the ultimate piece is rehearsed,  
Shall come his Great Moment to play,  
And the fiddle called second, be first.

III.

STREET MUSIC



how the dance-tune trips it through the  
street,

Making steps rhythmic, blood the lustier  
beat!

Throwing a thought of love and holiday  
Into the midst of Trade's most prosy way.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---


Look yonder: it is but an aged crone  
Crouched in a corner, wrinkled and alone,  
Half-dazed, who feebly grinds an organ small,  
Craving scant pence and sun — and that is all.

As soon I'd think to hear a gargoyle sing,  
A death-mask speak a lyric word of spring,  
As yonder hag fill all the drowsy air  
With music making Life alert and fair.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet hark, again the strain, the waltz-tune glad,  
The sudden rapture, the abandon mad,  
From a bleared woman, sick and old and sad!

IV.  
IN A THEATRE

IDDLE-SOUNDS in a foul, pent place;  
Seams of sin on every face

Uplooking there from the seats below,  
Foul-mouthed men and a shameless show.

A young girl stepping upon the stage;  
The singing of songs is half her wage,

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Selling her soul the other half ;  
They greet her now with a jeering laugh.

A face that somehow hints of good,  
Though stamped with all of the demonhood

That comes to souls that God made white  
Given over to shame and night.

And lo! she sings. The song that broke  
Her lips had naught of jibe or joke.

'Twas "Annie Laurie," and her face  
Lost, the while, its old disgrace,

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Her voice grew soft and sweet and clear ;  
She sang as though the words were dear.

Till the angel woke in every man,  
And memories stirred as memories can

Though seeming dead for long, wrong years ;  
Memories stirred and so did tears.

The reeking air turned meadow-sweet,  
And daisies danced beneath their feet,

While each man walked with his love or bride  
In the morning-break on the mountain-side.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**She ceased. No sound of plaudits came  
From the foul-mouthed men in the place of shame.**

**But one man sobbed and the rest were still;  
And the God above had worked his will.**

V.

AT THE SYMPHONY

**L**IST and listen and love it all,  
Here by the orchestra.  
The violins, how they plead and call,  
Taking the voice of her!

The brasses brave have a martial tone,  
The cymbals clash in strife:  
The grave bassoons half muse, half moan,  
Chanting the deeps of life.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

The 'cellos brood and the flutes rise clear  
In a cry that soars and sings;  
The rippling harps ensnare mine ear  
With a vibrant rush of wings.

O sweet with words no lips may dare,  
This speech of the orchestra!  
And yet — that burst from the wood-wind there —  
Was it weal or woe of her?

VI.

VIOLIN AND VIOLA

**A**T times, when, with an anguish all too  
keen,  
The violin doth tensely tell of grief,  
Tugging at heart-strings till the tale, I ween,  
Is over-cruel, calls for some relief :  
I joy to hear, like cooings of lost doves,  
The grave viola plaining of old loves.

VII.

A WALTZ THOUGHT

(To Eduard Strauss)

**W**HEN a man's prime passion, for years  
on years,  
Is giving birth to bright waltz airs,  
That are quick with life and love that cheers,  
And sweet as the bloom that the springtide  
wears;

'Tis a fancy sad and strange withal,  
To dream he must lie in a tomb some day  
And hear no longer the soft clear call  
Of music, once that he heard always.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

For I almost deem he would keep awake,  
And list to the song of the mountain stream,  
Would hark to the sound that the treetops make,  
Or the voice that follows the lightning's gleam ;

Would seize all melodies Nature knows,  
To fit the passion that haunts him still,  
Till out of them all a wild strain grows  
Graced and fashioned to suit his will ;

Would down in his grave our pulses stir,—  
Fancy him there in the chilly vaults,  
Singing e'en in his sepulchre,  
Subtly shaping his witching waltz !

VIII.  
A CATCH

**A**LONG comes Love  
In the semblance of a boy,  
And he rings a little bell,  
And he sings a little song :  
Lo, the change thereof !  
Heaven after hell,  
Beauty healing wrong,  
And grief turned joy !

IX.

A PIANIST

**H**IS stormy hands went down the crashing  
keys,  
Making a tumult wild of billowy sound;  
Fear roused his head, dark Passion too was there,  
Twin mighty presences that shook the air.

But sweet the resolution: wind-swept seas  
Sank magically, and up from Life's profound  
Stole shining Peace that spread from shore to  
shore,  
Till heaven seemed nigh and Love was evermore.

X.

DOVE NOTES



HE soft, strange note of the doves, to  
what may we liken the sound,  
As they flutter high at the eaves or flock  
for food to the ground?  
Their murmurings shy, remote, like a lost year's  
memory seem,  
Like melody heard under water, or music dimmed  
by a dream.

SEA MOODS



**H**ERE is music free in the waves of the  
    *sea,*  
Rejoicing by all his coasts:  
But the salt thereof is his agony  
    O'er the wrecks and the buried hosts.



## SEA RHAPSODY

### I.

**B**Y day, the tremble of the boat,  
As the engine throbs like a human  
heart;  
The tang of the untainted air, salt, free,  
Roaming long leagues of brine;  
The tidal lift and the slow swing, now the craft  
buries her nose in the billows;  
The sky of central blue, tapering down to misty  
opal at the sea line,  
And all around, the unsteady sapphire of the  
ocean.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

### II.

At night, snug in the cabin, cheerful with lamps,  
    With food and drink and the talk of cronies:  
Hard by, the friendly lights of the ships ;  
Far above, aloof, the homeless flicker of stars  
    In their high, impenetrable places.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

### III.

Then, sleep, midst the rock of the waves,  
To dream of dear ones distant on land,  
With a sense of lesion from all the ways of earth,  
A return to savage, sane realities:  
The tameless revels of strange, marine creatures;  
The hoarse voices of winds and waters,  
The hidden treasures of the deep,  
    Wide-scattered, inestimable, not to be  
    named.  
The face of tan, the boy's heart,  
The lost yet inextinguishable gust of youth, ex-  
    ultant once more.

IV.

Old Earth, the mother, sends forth her sons  
To adventure with the ancient, hoar, gammer  
sea ;  
Ever hereafter, as they come back and walk  
The dusty, fevered streets, and bargain in the  
marts,  
And sicken with heat and the sight of men,  
Will they carry at heart a cool, quieting thought,  
And yearn betimes for the ocean's open roads,  
For the rigors and raptures of the sailor life,  
The footless trail, the horizon's lovely lure, the  
sting and lull  
Of elemental water wastes,  
Restless, that yet bring rest.

## A MARSH MESSAGE

In Memoriam : Olivia Susan Clemens

**T**HE melancholy marshes brood  
In all their rich monotony :  
Beyond them, in a twilight mood,  
The more than melancholy sea.

A seemly spot for news of death :  
The message comes, with tidal pain :  
The ancient faring-forth of breath,  
The young laid low, the lovely slain.

Her life was one that, river-sweet,  
O'er sunny uplands ran,— but then  
Inexorably plunged to meet  
The under waves that wait for men,

The lethal waters, salt and still,  
Wherover mystery bides; the Vast  
Whose voice is mystic, and whose will  
Is stronger than our will at last.

\* \* \* \* \*

The marsh is troubled in its dream  
By a faint, tremulous stir of air:  
Is it the passing of the stream,  
The young fresh soul that was so fair?



# LULLABIES





L

AT FIRST

**B**ABY, the legends say  
Angels are here,  
Keeping all harm away  
That would come near.

There is a warmer thing  
Guarding thee, babyling,  
Than any angel-wing:  
It is my love so deep;  
Then sleep, child, sleep.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Baby, I cannot tell  
How strangely fair  
Are tower and citadel  
That glisten there  
In the sleep-country wide;  
Wonders on every side  
Wait thee and there abide:  
Marvels by wood and stream:  
So dream, child, dream.

MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Baby, much-travelled one,  
     When thou hast seen  
 Dawn, noon and set of sun  
     In sleep-lands green,  
 Haply thou wilt be fain  
     With all thy might and main  
     Homeward to turn again.  
 Is't so? For home's sweet sake,  
     Then wake, child, wake!

II.  
AT LAST



**WITHERED** face with great brown  
eyes  
That gazed through unwept tears;  
A smile on the mouth in motherwise,  
And tender, full of years.

Stretched on the sand a man, not old,  
With features warped by sin,  
And bad, albeit now death-cold,  
All passion dead within.

But ever the mother sat above  
Her son and rocked and sang,  
As though deep stirred by baby-love,  
While thus her cracked voice rang :

“Sun-gold thy hair, darling,  
Sleep, thou art fair, darling,  
Shut down thy pretty eyes ;  
Father is on the sea,  
Nobody’s by but me,  
Sleep, for the waters rise.”

So sang the fish-wife, bending o’er  
Her boy, just drowned and dead ;  
Crazed in her mind, the days of yore  
Kept revel in her head.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**“When thou art old, darling,  
Grown brave and bold, darling,  
Then thou shalt have a wife;  
Now thou art only mine,  
Little and fair and fine,  
Helpless in all thy life.”**

**The man lay still, and the sullen look  
Was ever on his face;  
His deeds read dark in the judgment book;  
His lot had been disgrace.**

**But the mother hugged the body wet,  
Gray-haired, and dazed in brain.  
As I walked away she was singing yet,  
Over and o'er again:**

## MESSAGE AND MELODY


---

**"Tis time to wake, darling,  
See! light will break, darling,  
Yonder across the quay;  
Come, wee one, kiss me now,  
Soft on my cheek and brow;  
Wake for the love of me,  
    My boy, my joy,—  
For the love of me,— for me!"**



III.

SLIPPER TIME

 **THIS** is a homely time of ease and rest,  
When the day dies out in the ruddy  
west

And the lamps are lit and the hearth fire leaps,  
And the children go to their early sleeps;

When the dear ones talk of their doings small  
And a sense of peace is on them all,  
For the cool, calm night must stretch between  
To-morrow's toil and to-day's flushed scene;

When memories throng and the word of cheer  
Is sometimes nigh to the secret tear,  
For the soul at lounge will range full far,  
From the pit of shame to the highest star.

The sound of music perhaps is heard,  
But the instrument or the uttered word  
Alike are sweet, since love in both  
Is immanent and nothing loath.

So the home folk feel, as the hours slip by,  
That Life is kind and that every sigh  
Is followed close by some pleasant thing,  
That laughter follows on suffering.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

'Tis a shade-tree set in a desert space ;  
In a discord harsh 'tis a note of grace ;  
'Tis the harmony of the perfect rhyme,  
This homely, human slipper time.

# NATURE PIECES



I.

THE SONG OF THE OPEN

**I** LOVE a level reach of land,  
That winds have room to turn in;  
I love in open fields to stand  
That hosts of flowers burn in.

I love far-stretching paths of sea  
Of turbulence unended,  
And salty smells, that make in me  
A life that's new and splendid.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

I love full well the naked sky,  
Wind-swept and hale and cheerful;  
For under her big voice can I  
Shake off my troubles tearful.

And so I turn, when so I may,  
From toil and moil of daytime,  
To hurry to the field away,  
And dare to have a play-time!

Again returning, all my thought  
Is lightsomer and sweeter,  
And songs upspring, though all unsought,  
In love's forgotten metre.

II.

AUTUMN CORN



THE withered autumn shocks of corn  
Are Indian braves, who stand  
a-row  
With wind-blown hair and look forlorn,  
And brood upon the long ago.  
Sere is their dress, and sere their mind,  
With tribe and totem far behind.



III.

QUAIL AND THRUSH



THE quail's staccato call from out the wood  
Comes clear unto mine ear;  
But in the thrush's note is mistifhood,—  
Meseems you hear  
His message only with the brooding mind,  
Blent in with memories, borne on last year's wind.


IV.

EARLY WINTER

**B**ROWN grass, picked out with red of  
bushes, tones  
Of silver on the fences; russet, bronze,  
The leaves of oaks and beeches; mystic black  
Where pools of water lie, and edged thereround  
The ghostly glamour of the shallow ice.  
Above, a gray-white monody of sky,  
And all between the heaven and earth a mist  
Of fine, fast-falling snow that makes a veil  
Wherethrough you see a mystery, a blend  
Of winter colors to a perfect whole  
That lifts the heart with beauty, doth atone  
For long-withholden loveliness of June.

V.

THE FALL OF THE LEAVES

OWN they come by millions,  
Pied and aspen things,  
Dancing airy cotillons,  
Drifting on wind-swept wings.  
With a music delicate yet clear,  
Thick they fall, in their painted cheer,  
Down the alleys old of the outworn year.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Gay-heart hopes and visions  
Mingled with their fall;  
Memories of elysians  
Buoyed them one and all.  
Faded, meek, and still they lie  
Under foot, and the farer-by  
Treads them in nor sees them die.

Peace! they have done their duty,  
Now is the time for rest.  
Peace! they have shown us beauty;  
Now, on the mother-breast  
They repose: their day was bright,  
On the tremulous trees they had delight;  
Now comes sleep and the soothe of night.

VI

AUTUMN SONG



**A** KEEN west wind from the hills away,  
A rustle of curled brown leaves,  
A blazon of colors,— O Autumn day,  
How Memory subtly weaves  
Into your scents and leaf-lit fires  
Hopes and dreamings and dead desires.

VII.

THE HILLS OF HOME

**A**FTER the mighty levels of the West,  
The far horizon and the open quest,—  
Back to the land of mists and memories,  
Hooded with trees and topped by dappled skies,  
Back to the valleys, whence the sun upclomb  
The hills of home!

Now let my dead youth have her way with me;  
This is a dream-while; I am glad to be  
Penned in by orchards, set about with pines,  
Lured down long vistas that the soul divines;  
The West anon,— boylike to-day I roam  
The hills of home!

VIII.

THE PINE TREE



THE sombre pine is a Norseman grave  
Brooding some saga old,  
Calmly chanting a solemn stave,  
Scorning the winter's cold.  
There's a Norland soul in this ancient tree,  
And he ne'er forgets his ancestry.

IX.

THE VALLEY

**I** HAVE seen a valley lying  
Underneath the yellow moon,  
When the winds had ceased their  
sighing,  
And the trees were all a-swoon.

And the sound of rivers rushing  
Filled the night, and made it seem  
Like to angel-garments brushing  
Through wide spaces in a dream.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Then my soul has filled with gladness,  
Shy, withal, but tender-deep ;  
And the daytime with its madness  
Seemed afar, and put to sleep :

For the riddles past divining  
In the noontide press of men,  
All grew plainer in the shining  
Of the sky's fair citizen.

Life turned easy, trust was stronger,  
Blossoms sprang from all my ills,  
As I lingered long and longer  
In the silence of the hills :

MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Till I loved the valley lying  
Underneath the yellow moon,  
Where the winds had ceased their sighing,  
And the trees were all a-swoon.

X.

THE BUGLER FROM THE PEAKS

**W**HAT is this cry that sudden seems to  
shake

The keen, still mountain ether wide  
awake,

Until the vast and candid snows of night  
Sound vibrantly on every doming height?

Hark, how it swells! The very stars do hear!  
This upper fastness reads the message clear;  
Her ancient language Mother-nature speaks:  
The bull-elk bugles midst the topmost peaks!

XI.

FALL FIELDS



THE sober-golden fields lie soaked in light,  
Like a great rug with patterns inter-  
plight  
Of tint and tone ; God's ancient place, the sky,  
Turns paler blue above such tapestry.

XII.

NATURE'S BOOK



THE tender green of willows by a stream  
In springtime, or the impressionable pools  
That duplicate the streaks of yellow sky  
At sunset, give me food for many a dream,  
Instruct me more than cunning of the schools,  
Bidding me kindly live, and calmly die.

XIII.

INDIAN SUMMER



SECURE in full fruition doth she rest,  
With mellow lights of golden afternoon  
Touching the placid joy of brow and  
breast;

Thus to behold her is to hark a tune  
Played chantwise, yet firm-founded upon peace,  
And glad of all the stormy year's release  
From passion's summer-world. So have I seen  
In tranced November come a day more rare  
Than any Spring could muster, ne'er to be  
Forgotten. How unfathomably fair  
Appears this tranquil creature unto me,  
This woman ample-natured, Autumn's queen!

XIV.

THE BROKEN PROMISE

**A**FTER the crisp of fall,  
There is beautiful summer weather :  
In the air is a wondrous Call,  
And tied things strain at their tether,  
And creeping and flying things  
Walk swift or essay their wings.

Then, a cold Word comes in the night,  
Bringing a message of blight :  
And the creeping things and the flying  
(Ah, the myriad lives effaced,  
And the pity of trust misplaced !)  
At morn, are all dead or dying.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**Man, in his knowledge, hath understood :  
But the humbler folk of the earth and air  
In their vast and vocal brotherhood  
(They only petition for living-room)  
Do fondly dream that the Spring has come,  
Till their very blood beats frolicsome :  
But they misinterpret a Semblance fair,  
And a Broken Promise is their doom.**



ON THE DEATH OF A MOTHER

**A** LITTLE maiden, her doll to her  
Was love and daughter and comforter ;  
Her eyes, far better than speaking could,  
Guessed and gossiped of motherhood.


One day they put at her breast her boy,  
And she knew the splendid mother-joy.  
After the agony, ah, the bliss  
Summed in that sacred, birthright kiss!

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Now, the old mother who broods us all  
Folds her fast, and she heeds the call ;  
Earth to earth, but she knows no fear,—  
Mother to mother means dear to dear.


BEFORE A SHRINE

HREE lilies grew in a garden  
That looked upon the sea ;  
These lilies white, they had a right  
To be beloved of me.  
I ask no man a pardon  
That, all within my garden,  
I loved those lilies three.

Three men came in my garden,  
Three men from o'er the sea ;  
One black as night, one gold-bedight,  
And one that looked at me,  
And praised my growing garden :  
I ask my God for pardon,  
I loved him of the three.

Strange things come out of the sea :  
I loved him well, ah me !  
There came a wind that blights the kind  
Of flowers lilies be.  
Mary, Mother of charity,  
Now I pray for pardon :  
Here, within my garden,  
Sin came unto me ;  
Mother, I call to thee ;  
Right the rue that came unto  
The lily-blooms and me !

THE DESERTED SCHOOL

 HERE broods a pathos of a time long past  
In every nook and every grass-grown  
way;

The fences lean as tired out at last,  
That once pent in so many lads at play.

The doors gape open, but one harks in vain  
For human voices or for hurrying feet;  
The rusty weather-cock creaks out that rain  
Or days uncloudy come, or snow and sleet.

The gables droop, the windows, staring-eyed,  
Do seem to mock one pitying the place;  
A thousand birds and flowers long have tried  
To put upon the scene a summer face.

But spite of them, a silence wide and deep  
Clings round the corners, sits on every stone:  
It is a spot for lingering and sleep,  
For guessing other fortunes than your own.

I people all the playground up and down  
With rushing forms and sound of laughter  
high;  
I watch the light of evening like a crown  
Upon the walls, till pales the western sky.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

I wonder how those sturdy limbs have fared  
That since have wandered far as east and west;  
I wonder who from sorrows have been spared,  
I strive to read the hearts that have been blest;

And so my love would follow, one by one,  
The life of each, and all its changes know —  
Until the faces fade, as did the sun  
That lit the players in the long-ago.

And I am left a solitary, all  
My youth gone from me, in a daze to take  
Mid-manhood's burden up, until I fall  
Upon the beaten highway of Heartbreak.

THE WORLD ASLEEP

**W**AKING by night, a great and tender  
thought  
Rolled in upon my soul; I seemed to  
*see*

Millions of men of high and low degree,  
Women and children small,— all overwrought  
With labor, sin or weakness, or distraught  
Through passion's power,— in deep tranquillity,  
With placid breasts and breath that issued free,  
As if they lay at peace, regretting naught.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And O it was a wonderful mild sight,  
Those helpless forms of all God's creatures there,  
Worldlings and saints, alike as dove and dove,  
Resuming innocence and lost delight,  
All quieted and with sleep's magic fair,  
One in the Father's watch and ward of love.

## THE UNFORGOTTEN

**W**HENE'ER I *see*, hurrying through  
worldly ways,  
Those who forget the friends they once  
have known,


Who seemed like very kinsmen of their own  
For fond affection: merged now in the haze  
That broods o'er the Eternal; The old days  
Faint too and far, like fairy tales outflown  
From rooms of childhood,— I must inly moan  
That Time such numbing power upon us lays.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

As if the Past were not a playground, where  
The unforgotten mates slip to and fro  
In games whose dimness makes them doubly  
fair,  
The heart's best comradeship, when all is said;  
As if less lovely were the Long Ago,  
Or men could lose their dearness, being dead.

“WORDS, WORDS, WORDS”

HE melancholy Prince did surely err:  
Each several word is as a vital sign  
That here some man has tasted Life's  
rich wine,

Been thrall to ill, been Beauty's worshipper,  
Or mayhap felt the immemorial stir  
Of passion. Words are symbols that divine  
The more than mortal that is subtly thine;  
They stand for all the dreams that ever were.  
They have their regal fortunes, and their falls  
Like Lucifer from heaven; tragic days  
Are theirs, and love's soft interludes  
Of music lyric-sweet along the ways;  
At whiles, some nether hell their sound recalls;  
Yet o'er supernal heights their meaning broods.

## A FORECAST



**T**HROUGH all the wood the rain drops  
ceaselessly

And every whiff of air shakes down on  
me

Dank hints of storm, dark auguries of skies  
Unchanged and cheerless: so, in hopeless wise  
I trudge, until a gleam of light ahead  
Reveals the open, makes my soul less dead.  
Into the day I step,— thou foolish one,  
The rain has long been o'er, behold the sun!  
The forest did but lie, the storm is done.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Love, it may be that in some sunlit land  
Beyond the present troubling, now you stand  
And smile most tenderly, because I dream  
The rain is falling and, lead-hearted, deem  
No hope can pierce the limitless gray shore :  
Maybe, beyond 'tis shining evermore,  
And you await me with the old-time grace,  
The same dear eyes, the same divine dear face,  
One with the sun in making glad the place.

SOUND IN SILENCE

**T**ALKING when all the ways seemed  
wondrous still,  
I suddenly was ware it was not so:  
The silence was a web of sound, below,  
Above, that did the earth and heavens fill.  
The wood-hid thrush, the field-sparrow's sliding  
trill,  
The dominant insistence of the crow,  
The shrill of crickets and the voiceful flow  
Where curve the river currents down the hill,  
The wind amidst the pines, the far-off calls  
Of boys at play, the hayers at their task  
With creaking carts, the lowing cows — they all  
Were present, like the face behind the mask.  
The silence swarmed with noises, nay, was blent  
With many musics, for my solacement.

## PENELOPE'S LOVER

**I** READ how once Ulysses, far from home,  
Daunting all dangers o'er the wine-dark  
sea,

Came to the island where the Sirens be  
Who waft sweet song athwart the ocean's foam.  
And there, beneath the blue sky's ample dome,  
For fear those luring strains they might not flee,  
His comrades bound him to the mast, that he  
Might 'scape the enchantment fierce, nor isle-  
ward roam.

And as I read, I wish the story ran,  
That in the hero's breast love beat so strong  
No Siren's voice, no sound of soothing song,  
Could tempt him, on his ship, to change his plan,  
And slack the oar that should, by sun or star,  
Dip towards Penelope and Ithaca.



## WALL STREET



**TRAIT** river, with its hoarse and feverous flood

Of money-makers; on that turbulent tide

Hourly men sink, or bring their argosies  
To unhopèd havens. On that tiny stage  
The drama of the dollar is played out  
In tragic throes that shake the land; there gold  
Is God, the devotees are hollow-eyed.

A touch brings London; at a mystic word  
The tropics tremble; while an upraised hand  
Withers broad grain-fields lovely in the sun  
A thousand leagues away.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Meantime, the spire  
Of Trinity, as set in satire there,  
Points with insistent finger to the skies  
Placid above this lust of loss-and-gain,  
And underneath, the aisles of peace and prayer  
Await the worshippers who still would place  
Christ above Mammon, love before the world.

PEACE OUT OF PAIN



**A**S from some fruit, bitter in the beginning,  
A rare, sweet draught is pressed, finds  
strange release ;  
So, out of turmoil, pain and sorry sinning,  
All mystically issues peace.

DON'T DREAM, BUT DO!

**T**IS an easy thing, if you want to know  
How sweet the summer is, just to go  
Down in the fields, or deep in the wood,  
Or fain toward the swash of the sea.  
For they all will teach you how heavenly good  
Such wholesome places be.  
If you seek the soul's warm summer, too,  
Don't dream, but do!

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Don't sit at home with your brain-born book  
And balance questions and pry and look  
Askance at this, or wonder how  
That squares with some ancient doubt ;  
But get in touch with the throbbing Now,  
And let your heart go out  
To your fellow-men who are spent and blue.  
Don't dream, but do !

Work in the world for the folk thereof ;  
With every deed that is done in love  
Some criss-cross matter is smoothed for aye ;  
The spirit sees straight and clear ;  
And heaven draws close that was far away,  
As you whistle off each fear.  
Work, for the days are fleet and few.  
Don't dream, but do !

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**You may worry over God's grinding Laws,  
You may probe and probe for the great First  
Cause;  
But an hour of life with an honest thrill  
Of self-forgetting joy  
Will ease your mind of its moody ill  
And make you blithe as a boy.  
The plan is simple; then see it through:  
Don't dream, but do!**

A RYME FOR CHRISTMAS



**A** RYME for Christmas, ye good folk all,  
A song for the time o' year  
Make merry music in bower and hall,  
With hey for a day of cheer!

But season the jest with a kindly deed,  
And let love deepen the song.  
In the outer ways there are hearts that bleed  
And hands that labor long.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

As the yule-log burns and the gifts go round,  
As the indoor romps are high,  
Oh, gentles, hark to the doleful sound  
Of the homeless 'neath the sky!

For how shall ye keep the Christmas-tide,  
Or cherish its Founder's name,  
Unless that your hearts be open wide  
To His people's want and shame?



PAIN

**G**RIM-FACED fellow, silent guest  
At Life's feast, what will'st with  
me?

With a great fear unexpressed  
At my heart, I follow thee ;  
Leave the lights, the laughter gay,  
Heavy-hearted go away.

At the last, I thank thee, friend :  
I am weaned from specious show  
Of delight,— the banquet-end  
Meant but surfeit : now I know  
Real from seeming, and am trussed  
For the May-be and the Must.

CITY STREETS



SAW a sad sight yesterday.  
A girl, whose look was pale  
And sullen-set, was led away  
To serve her term in jail;

And as she walked, betwixt two men  
Who vigilantly stepped,  
Her better self came back,— and then,  
Dear angels, how she wept!

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And yet, at eve I saw a sight  
Sadder an hundred fold:  
Within a place of glaring light  
A woman, flushed and bold,

Lifted a glass of feignèd cheer,  
And as the drink she quaffed  
She breathed a curse one would not hear,  
And looked to heaven — and laughed!

## MEMORIALS

**B**ESIDE the shining river's brim,  
By vital green of grasses spanned  
And circled by the hills, that rim  
The blue horizon's wonder-land,  
The ruins of a dwelling rise  
Pathetic to the evening skies.

Mounds, where a hearth fire once was bright ;  
And tumbled rails that girdled in  
A garden with its blooms alight  
And waving growths, their next-of-kin :  
Above, a well sweep rising sheer  
Out of the wreck of many a year.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

An eloquence of what is past  
Broods like a ghost around the place ;  
The dreams that brick and stone outlast  
Sit peering in each other's face ;  
Lo, every corner stone is ripe  
With phantoms of forgotten life,


Here love was potent, work and play  
Lifted twin voices clear and strong ;  
There is no other sound to-day  
Save music of the river's song :  
Across the crumbled years they call,  
The well-sweep and the ruined wall.

THE HOMING BIRD



HE soul is like a homing bird that's sure  
To wing its way to the beloved place;  
Above the sea or land, through air more  
pure  
Than mortal breathes, it cleaves the tracts of  
space,  
Steered by a yearning wonderful, elate  
To reach the native loft, the lonesome mate.

THEN


OU cannot understand, my little one,  
Why tears of tenderness make blind my  
eyes,

In looking on your face that, like the sun,  
Sheds gladness, like a morn of sweet sunrise.

Perplext, you touch me with a wondering hand;  
Thank God, 'tis so,—for when long years are  
fled,—

Then will you know, remember, understand,—  
Then, in the dream-like years when I am dead.


CREED AND DEED

HE Rose, who reigns the queen of  
flowers,  
Quoth to the Violet,  
“One thing, come dear, come woful hours,  
I never can forget.”  
“I prithe, make thy wisdom ours,”  
Quoth modest Violet.

“There’s naught that’s like a clear-cut creed,”  
The regal Rose replied ;  
“So pray your prayer, and bid your bead,  
And keep the law beside.”  
“A goodly deed’s a goodly deed,”  
The modest Violet sighed.



THE UNSPOKEN

UR speech is but a surface foam; below  
Broods the unspoken, and her caves are  
rife

With turbulent powers and passions, to and  
fro—

The veiled vitalities of under life.

We meet and part, we say and straight unsay,  
Nor tell our mid-sea longings to our mates;  
But all the while, deep down and put away,  
The unsaid sways our fortunes and our fates.

PRAYER TIDES

*Matins*

**T**HE opal tints of dawn have come,  
The winds upspring all frolicsome ;  
Ah, how may living lips be dumb ?  
So, Lord, this orison to Thee !

*Nones*

The heat and burden of the day  
Beats down, the dews have slipt away ;  
There is no heart that seems to pray ;  
Let mine as one more faithful be.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY


---

### *Vespers*

The nun-like gray of evening-tide  
Makes worshipful the heavens wide;  
Anon comes night, the stilly-eyed;  
The world's a-pause and prays with me.

## SANCTUARY

(Written for the Tenth Anniversary of the Library at  
Norfolk, Connecticut)

 **O**ld the hunted wretch, if only he  
Might tread the sacred steps and gain  
the shrine,  
Was safe from hurt; the most high Gods would  
be  
His bulwark, by their presences divine.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Gasping, he threw himself against their knees  
And felt the grace of their unshaken calm :  
A seaman caught from Life's tumultuous seas,  
A wounded body healed by magic balm.

\* \* \* \* \*

So, from the baffling storms, from hostile spears,  
From strife and struggle that enmesh our day,  
Behold the Sanctuary that the years  
Make but more precious, and shall make alway.

A place of peace, an altar where the mind  
Finds strength in prayer, a home and haven dear  
Of souls, a senate-house of mortal kind  
Become immortal — lo, the Gods are here !

## REVERY

### *Evening*

**D**IM grows the wood; the amber evening  
tints

Merge into opal skies and stars just seen;  
Down vistas gloomed and winding there are  
hints

Of elves and gnomes along the mosses green.

### *Midnight*

A holy song the thrush has distant-sung;  
The tree-tops murmur like some dreaming sea;  
Hark! far away a silvern bell has rung  
Twelve strokes, slow tolled, that faint and fade  
from me.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

### *Morning*

A shaft of gold upon my upturned face  
As fleeting and as shy as any fawn ;  
Sweet odors, stirring winds and forms of grace ;  
Now tell me, is this heaven, or is it dawn ?

## THE YOUNG MAN'S PRAYER

**W**HEN full of years, O God! and reckoned  
sage,  
Companioned by the memories that en-  
shrine

The Past: when Life has yellowed o'er the page  
Of Youth, and, musing, I must needs repine  
The loss of friends, that bitter sign of age,  
White hairs, the silver sign:

Oh, may the Long Ago loom soft and fair,  
Recalling, not the evil and the stress,  
But tranquil hours, and gentle faces there,  
Flashes of joy, and sacred tenderness;  
A sense of peace along the evening air,—  
Visions that charm and bless!



TO A CHILD CRYING



**THOU** pretty one, why dost thou wail and  
plain

So piteously? Thou hast but lived a day  
And surely thou and sorrow are not grown  
To fellowship,— and yet, poor, tiny child,  
Listening I seem to catch within thy cry  
A bitter protest 'gainst a host of wrongs;  
Methinks thou weepst, not for thy wee self,  
But for mankind, untutored spokesman of  
The universal ill; yea, presciently  
Dost, though a babe, foretell to shallow souls  
The depths, the tear-stained dramas of a world.

## SYMBOLS



**A** SIMPLE, tintless flower is the lily  
white;  
But it symbols what is sweet and pure  
and right,  
And it thrills to my very soul with love and  
light.

And a red bush, nothing more, is the Judas-tree;  
But whenever it flaunts its sanguine blooms, to  
me  
Comes a vision of Christ, and a dread of  
treachery.

MEMORIES

**A**S his yarn a seaman spins  
With a twinkle in his eye,  
Weaving wonders from the past  
While his ship heaves o'er the brine ;  
So the memories that are mine  
Tell their tale beside the mast  
Of Life's bark, that bellies by  
O'er Time's sea of songs and sins.

## THE REFORMER



**A** MAN once stood before a frowning wall  
Whereon was writ a lie since ancient  
days,  
And threw his heart's blood by the cupful straight  
Against the legend, so to wipe it out,  
Tapping his veins of all their purple yield  
In his desire. At last he grew so weak  
That, tottering-limbed, he heaved glazed eyes to  
heaven,  
Sighed like a weary child, smiled once, and fell.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

And when his dust was mingled with the mould  
That giveth birth to flowers, the people woke  
One morn, and looked upon the wall, to see  
A clean erasure of the glozing words  
Had grieved the man so, he that calmly slept,  
Oblivious alike of loves and lies  
That make our human story.

Then there ran  
A whisper, soon a cry, across the land:  
"God urged him to the act, and he was glad  
To spill his blood and make us clearer-eyed."  
Whereat the very folk who carelessly  
Passed by that day he drained his throbbing  
strength  
And paled his flesh, upreared a cenotaph  
And deified his name to after-times.

HYMN FOR A TOWN

(Sung at the 250th Anniversary of the founding of  
Middletown, Conn.)

**W**HERE the red man roved of yore  
By a stately water-lane,  
Lo, was sown a seed that bore  
Hundred-fold of goodly grain;  
Which the hardy pioneers  
Harvested with blood and tears.

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

Homely times were those, and grim,  
By the green-rimmed river-side ;  
Oft with battle smoke were dim,  
Where the stanch forefathers died ;  
But, with sounds of prayer and praise,  
Came white peace and sweeter days.

Ships were built of sturdy frame,  
And the marts with trade were rife ;  
Schools uprose in wisdom's name,  
Churches hymned the higher life ;  
So the holdfast English race  
Set God's seal upon the place.

We have reaped what they have sown.  
Honed, down the streets we tread,  
Carven clear in changeless stone,  
Be the memories of the dead ;  
For through them our town doth bide  
Beautiful her stream beside.

Not to them alone, to Thee,  
God of elder years and ours,  
Be the laud, for Thou canst see  
In the root the pledge of flowers ;  
Though man's ways be passing strange,  
Yet Thy counsels do not change.



## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

City of our love and life,  
River-town of spreading trees,  
Peaceful, after early strife,  
Prospered by the centuries,  
Thou forever shalt endure,  
If thy faith be firm and pure.

## OUR CITY OF AËRIAL LIGHT

(The Buffalo Fair)

**I**T loomed, in summer's morning hours,  
A clustered Orient of towers;  
And in the splendid blaze of noon  
I gloried in its stately boon  
Of colors, wandered in a trance  
Past many a vision of romance.

But when the dark was come, behold!  
It grew a magic burg of gold,  
With soul released, above the night,  
Our city of aërial light!

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

While marble-girdled waters gleamed  
In mystic hues and tints undreamed,  
A thousand thousand points of fire  
Blent in one heavenward, high desire.

O land we love, take heart of grace,  
For thou hast wrought this wonder-place!  
O land of lands, be thine the same  
Pure aspiration of the flame!

# PLAY-ROOM POEMS



I.

SNOW AND RAIN



**T**ELL me (quoth Lillian) what is the snow?  
"Up in the very highest heaven  
Circle the great throne angels seven,  
Nearest to God, you know.  
While, inwoven their garments through,  
Are pearls, pure gems of a saintly hue;  
And, as the wide wings beat the air,  
Away up there,  
They shake white pearls on the earth below;  
And that is the snow."

## MESSAGE AND MELODY

---

**Tell me (quoth Lilian) what is the rain?**

**“Up in the very highest heaven**

**Circle the great throne angels seven,**

**Nearest to God, again.**

**While, inwoven their garments through,**

**Glisten great diamonds glad of hue,**

**And, as the wide wings rise and fall,**

**They scatter them all**

**Earthward, to catch on the way a stain;**

**And that is the rain.”**

II.

THE WIND-BROOM



THE wind-broom sweeps so wondrous  
clean

That when you hear it up on high  
Go swishing by, go swishing by,  
You may be sure the sky-folk mean  
To make their homes all fair to see,  
Garnished, and gay as gay can be  
O' nights, for starry company.



III.

STAR SHIPS



THE stars are ships on a blue, cold sea,  
Gold ships, that sail and sail;  
They keep their course right steadily,  
Unvexed by any gale.

For God their helmsman is, I trow ;  
In sea-craft of the air  
So skilled, that all the winds that blow  
Seem favoring and fair.



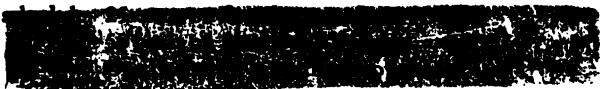




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